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RURAL MINNESOTA RISING

As capitalism fails the countryside, residents take matters into their own hands

FOOD Hide out at the Bungalow Club *p. 17* | **A-LIST** Surly Darkness Day moves to WI *p. 19* | **MUSIC** Is there life after *The Voice*? *p. 31*

Not So Fuzzy Navel

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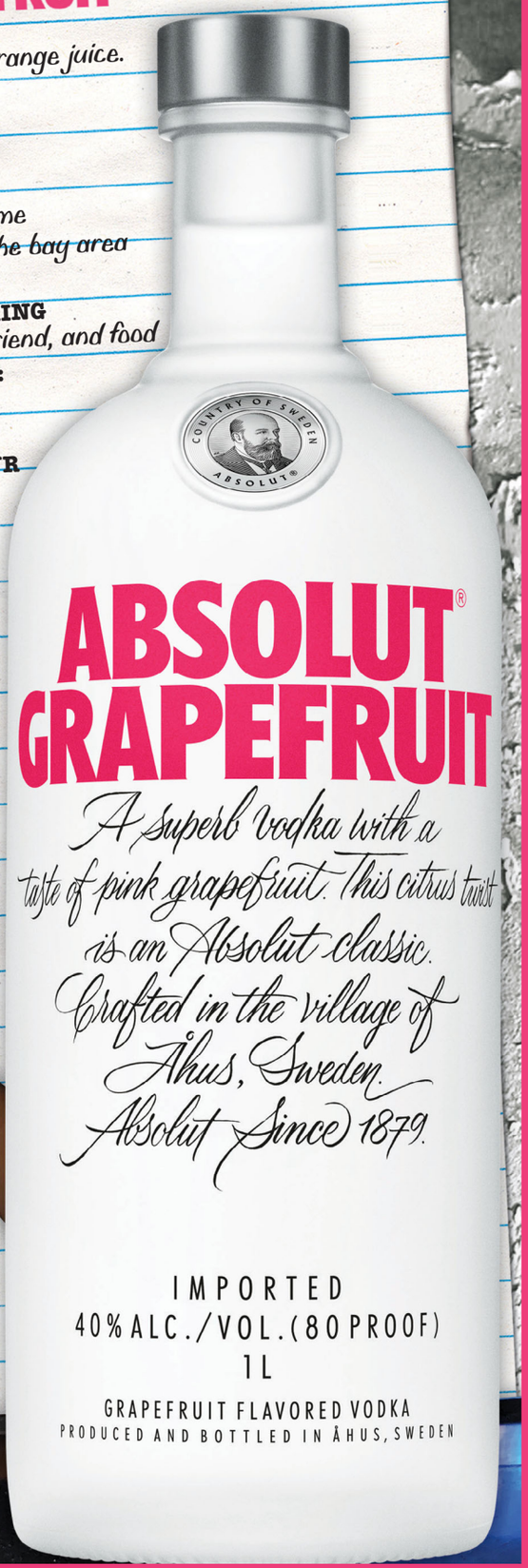
BIGGEST PET PEEVE: Getting called by another name
IF YOU WERE SENT TO AN ISLAND AND COULD ONLY BRING 3 THINGS, WHAT WOULD YOU BRING: Water, my girlfriend, and food
IF YOU WEREN'T A BARTENDER, WHAT WOULD YOU BE: A clothing designer or a bar owner
BEST HANGOVER CURE: Water and sleep
MOST ANNOYING THING SOMEONE CAN DO TO GET YOUR ATTENTION FOR A DRINK: Touch you
WHAT IS YOUR ESTABLISHMENT KNOWN FOR: A good time - partying

BARTENDER OF THE WEEK

Sean



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Editorial

EDITOR Pete Kotz
MANAGING EDITOR Hannah Sayle
WEB EDITOR Jay Boller
NEWS EDITOR Mike Mullen
MUSIC EDITOR Keith Harris
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ARTS EDITOR Jessica Armbruster
STAFF WRITERS Susan Du, Hannah Jones
COPY CHIEF Bridgette Reinsmoen
PROOFREADER Bryan Miller
CLUBS EDITOR Erik Thompson
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Jerard Fagerberg, Jay Gabler, Tony Libera, Michael Madden, Erica Rivera, Sheila Regan
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Galen Fletcher, Alma Guzman, Lucy Hawthorne, E. Katie Holm, Shelly Mosman, Tony Nelson, Colin Michael Simmons

Art

ART DIRECTOR Emily Utne
LAYOUT EDITOR Jake Luck

Production

DESIGN MANAGER Dana Holmay
GRAPHIC DESIGNER Jackie Kilmer

Publisher

Mary Erickson

Advertising

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MARKETING COORDINATOR
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MARKETING INTERN Molly Kwakenat

Business and Administration

FINANCE MANAGER Bernadette Botoshe
STAFF ACCOUNTANT Du Nguyen Ho

City Pages

800 1st St. N., Ste. 300,
Minneapolis, MN 55401
PHONE 612.375.1015 FAX 612.372.3737
E-MAIL adinfo@citypages.com
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THE SHORTLIST

Dean Phillips employs Bigfoot to hunt down the elusive Erik Paulsen
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DEAN PHILLIPS CAMPAIGN

THE STAT SHEET

4

Minnesota's per capita ranking among states with the most patents

56

Percentage of Minnesota's registered voters who support legalizing recreational weed

$210 million

Amount the Twin Cities Catholic diocese will pay to settle another round of cases involving predatory priests

56%

Donald Trump's disapproval rating in Minnesota

> **"If those walls could talk... they'd say, 'Hey! Stop touching me!'"**

Reader John Schwarzkopf responds to "Wanna live like a disgraced public radio legend?" at citypages.com.

HEALTH CARE

WHILE AMERICA may have the second most expensive health care in the world (after Switzerland), at least it's not very good.

That's the finding of Bloomberg, which created a formula using cost, per capita income, and life expectancy to rank care among 56 industrialized nations. The U.S. finished second to last—ahead of only Bulgaria, and trailing such luminaries as Azerbaijan, Russia, and Serbia.

Twenty-five other countries now have a greater life expectancy. And if you really want your health dollars to deliver the most bang for the buck, Bloomberg suggests you move to Hong Kong.

POPULAR STORIES
AT CITYPAGES.COM

The **WALL OF FORGOTTEN NATIVES**: Inside Minneapolis' largest homeless encampment

A St. Paul resident's **NIGHTMARE HOME** becomes a cautionary tale for inspectors

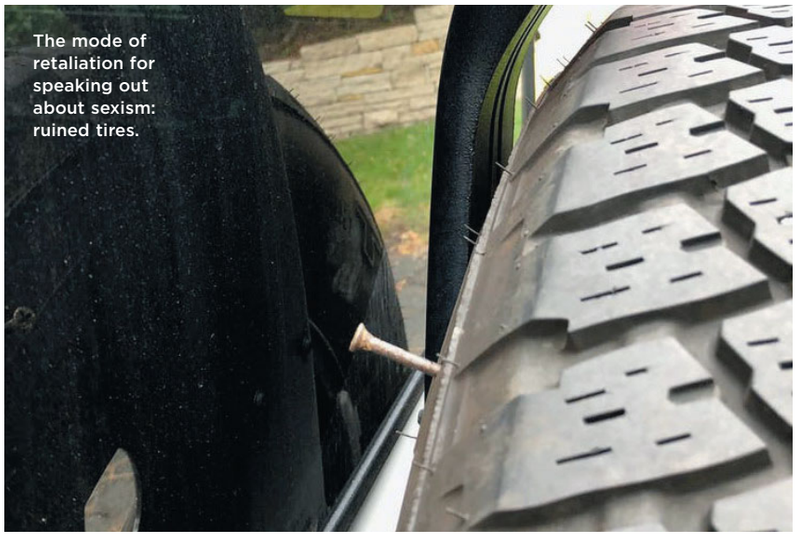
You knew **TWIN CITIES TRAFFIC** sucked, but you didn't know it sucked this much

164 YEARS LATER, St. Paul might attempt a skyline

Video of Bloomington Walmart employee's **RACIST RANT** resurfaces

TIRE ATTACKS

Someone's sending a message to the women of West St. Paul



The mode of retaliation for speaking out about sexism: ruined tires.

MATT KLEIN

Democratic State Sen. Matt Klein noticed one of his tires continually deflating. Then he noticed a screw embedded in its side.

This was more than a screw. It was a message. And he wasn't the first target.

In 2016, Jenny Halverson became the first female mayor of West St. Paul, and she delivered an impassioned speech calling out sexism in city government. Soon, she found a box of tampons discarded on her doorstep.

At the next City Council meeting, dozens of women spoke in support of the mayor. The Women of West St. Paul group was born.

In the following days, they would discover they had an interesting thing in common: flat tires. Five or six had their tires spiked with drywall screws.

Halverson told Fox 9 News that the screws were "pretty clearly retaliation" for the women speaking out. But police have made no headway in finding the assailant.

"I don't even know how to feel about it," says Kali Freeman. "It's such an obvious connection. All of us spoke, and all of us got screws in our tires."

Months passed. West St. Paul geared up for the primary. Sen. Klein put a sign in his yard supporting Wendy Berry, who's running for the City Council. She too has spoken out against sexism in city government. Her opponent is the city's former mayor, David Meisinger.

And now there's a screw in Klein's tire, too.

Katie Dohman, whose car was also attacked, is unnerved. Now that a state lawmaker is among the targets, she's worried that matters could escalate. She drives her three kids around in that car, and a blowout could have killed someone.

In the wake of the latest incident, Klein wrote on Facebook that he stood with Berry, and that "a screw in my interior sidewall won't slow that train down."

Berry made her own statement: "We will not be intimidated," she wrote. "We will not be silenced. These things will continue to not be forgotten. We will get to the polls. We will vote. We will win."

Klein still has the tire, and the screw. They're mounted on the back of his car, like a badge of honor. —HANNAH JONES

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COURTESY OF JACOB RIEKE

Rural Minnesota RISING

As capitalism fails the countryside, residents take matters into their own hands

By
PETE KOTZ

The Civil War was in full fury when Jacob Rieke's ancestors took flight from Germany, eventually coming to rest outside Fairfax, Minnesota. Five generations later, his family still works this land, farming corn, soybeans, and hogs.

But it wasn't long ago that Rieke considered fleeing. Wretched internet imperiled a way of life.

Farming is no longer a vocation of eager sweat and sturdy backs. It's one of drones sending real-time reads on moisture and soil conditions. Combines broaching the sophistication of fighter jets. Satellite data that parses the varying characteristics of a field, allowing for precision seeding and fertilizing that can save tens of thousands of dollars a year.

Yet it all requires the kind of internet service city folks take for granted. In these lands two hours southwest of Minneapolis, private companies offered a patchwork of plans, often at towering prices for near-useless speeds.

When his young daughters watched a buffering version of Netflix, Rieke couldn't work. "If someone else fired up something on their device, Netflix would go down," he says. "It was always a competition to see who could use the internet."

Meanwhile, teachers in the Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop district were forced to circumscribe lessons because the kids couldn't do research. On winter nights, students idled in cars outside libraries, seeking access to Wi-Fi just to do their homework.

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Rieke was left with the lingering sense he would fail his daughters, sentencing them to a lesser education.

"I knew that if nothing ever changed, we couldn't live like this," he says. "We were going to have to look at a different house somewhere."

Outside nearby Gibbon, Linda Kramer endured a similar fix. Her family grows corn, soybeans, and wheat, while her husband also works as a crop consultant. He'd attempt to send field data to clients, only to watch it take days to upload. So he'd find himself driving 40 miles just to deliver thumb drives.

"We weren't being able to accomplish what people in the cities or other rural areas were able to accomplish," Kramer says.

Their problems weren't unique. Across hulking swaths of Minnesota, gas stations struggle to run credit cards. Counties see scant hope of nursing new businesses. And everyone worries the evacuation of their young will only accelerate. Forgive college grads who can't see futures in places where it takes hours to load an Instagram photo.

Under normal circumstances, American faith would dictate that where there is great need, free enterprise will arrive to fill the void. But the exact opposite occurred. Internet providers see a slim upside to investing in regions of sparse population and sheepish incomes. Especially when competition is thin to nonexistent, and you're already charging top dollar for the weariest service money can buy.

This bind has not only left rural residents to trail far behind their urban brethren. They're chasing much of the developing world.

"When Minnesota is behind Bulgaria, there's a problem," says former state Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea).

Yet something quite beautiful has come from all this. Outstate Minnesota is resorting to an old-fashioned brand of socialism, using co-ops and community-owned ventures to surmount the neglect.

Says Kramer: "We just figured we were going to be left further and further behind. The companies in our area weren't doing anything for us. So we needed to do it for ourselves."

LIFE AMONG THE SCREWED

"We don't care. We don't have to. We're the phone company."

This was the punchline of a 1976 *Saturday Night Live* skit, when Ma Bell held monopoly sway over the U.S. phone system. In the years to follow, cable TV would launch new fiefdoms, birthing generations of executives known for abusing their customers, who had nowhere else to go.

Fast forward to today, and consumer hostility flares undiminished. Surveys have shown that among the nation's 12 most reviled companies for customer service, the telecom industry holds eight spots.

COURTESY OF JACOB RIEKE

Jacob Rieke was left with the lingering sense he would fail his daughters, sentencing them to a lesser education.

In Minnesota, no company affirms this notoriety like Frontier Communications, which serves the southern and northeastern parts of the state. During a mere five-week period earlier this year, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission received 439 complaints about the Connecticut firm.

The grievances read like a cannonade of frustration. They speak of no-show repairmen. Endless waits on hold. Charges for services never rendered. Outages that last for days.

"I have never dealt with a more incompetent company than Frontier," writes one customer on Google Reviews. "I have no other choice for internet or phone service in my area.... It took me over three months just for Frontier to get to my house to even connect my service.... They also canceled multiple times for installation without calling. They just didn't show up."

These maladies aren't exclusive to the outbacks. They also extend to Watertown Township, in the exurbs of Carver County.

"Frontier Communications is my only option for internet," Kathleen McCann wrote state regulators. "My internet service is worse than dial-up.... As a dentist, I am not able to email dental X-rays. It took me 47 minutes to upload one small photo to Facebook recently."

As Frontier Vice President Javier Mendoza sees it, his company is at a disadvantage, serving more rural areas than its rivals. While it's one thing to connect a compact city, it's quite another build a network across the unsparing tundra.

"The economic reality is that upgrading broadband infrastructure in the more rural parts of the state is not economically viable," he says.

Which leaves customers forgoing YouTube, Pandora, and using more than one device in the same home. Launching a business with anything but remedial tech needs is out of the question.

"When Minnesota is behind Bulgaria, that's a problem," says former state Rep. Dan Dorman.

Yet while Frontier faces the heaviest fire, its peers aren't held in much higher esteem.

Across Minnesota, people tell of speeds delivered at a fraction of what they pay for. Peak evening hours where loading a web page becomes a Sisyphean task. Packages in monopoly areas that sell for $50 more than in neighboring towns with competition.

In Brainerd, it translates to volunteers who can't do online training to be approved as hockey coaches.

In Kandiyohi County, it means the hunting trap company battles to send catalogs to clients.

"Where internet is the worst, it's often the most expensive," says Bill Coleman of Community Technology Advisors. "The

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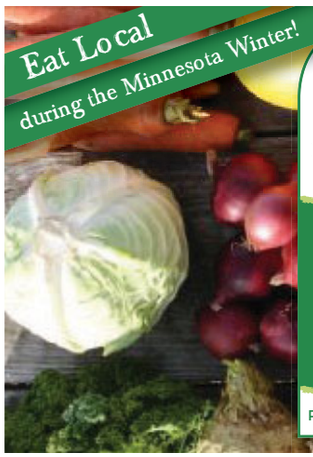

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market has failed when it comes to rural Minnesota."

Mediacom is among the few outfits investing in top-flight rural fiber. It now claims minimum speeds of 60 megabits per second. (The FCC's basic broadband standard is 25, though much of outstate Minnesota operates in the low single digits.)

Mediacom VP Tom Larsen understands the complaints: "You have a product that you can't live without, and I think the angst drives up when there's an issue." Yet he makes no bones about the difficulty of serving sparse populations amid the siren call for profit.

"We take a lot of criticism as an industry for not doing more," Larsen says. "The reality is we're doing this with private money, and it has to make sense. You need a return."

Herein lies the rub. When companies do invest, they're not prone to pushing improvements beyond regional centers, leaving inhabitants of the woods and fields to fend for themselves. Their presiding motive, after all, is to puff stock prices and executive pay. The lives of farmers and lake dwellers run a very distant second.

"If the CEO of CenturyLink said he was going to spend $100 million in rural Minnesota," says Coleman, "they'd probably get a new CEO."

All of which leaves the information superhighway running more like the rail lines of yesteryear, Dorman says. Towns with respectable depots have a chance to thrive. Towns without are fated to wither and die.

"Those people are screwed," says Christopher Mitchell of the Institute of Local Self-Reliance, a Minneapolis nonprofit. "People who make business or real estate decisions are not going to move to that area."

COURTESY OF LINDA KRAMER

For Linda Kramer, the new co-op means allowing her family to be "good stewards of the land."

THE RENVILLE-SIBLEY INSURRECTION

Winthrop, Minnesota wished not to be among the screwed. Mark Erickson, the city's economic development director, was charged with finding a way to the modern world.

He spent 18 months trying to convince local companies of the virtues of a community partnership. They balked.

Winthrop—population 1,399—was too small to build a high-speed fiber system on its own. So it resorted to a spirit of socialism practiced a century ago, the kind that brought electricity, phone lines, and farm cooperatives to the Minnesota backcountry.

It would seem a despairing quest. Sibley County is in the heart of Trumpland. "Out here, we're quite conservative," says Erickson. "When the Republican Party says something, people listen."

Yet the resulting campaign would exhibit a savvy and insistence few lefty activists could match. It involved 10 cities and 17 townships across Renville and Sibley counties. Over 100 educational meetings spanning two years. Seventy volunteers to carry the load.

The final outcome: RS Fiber, a co-op that delivers better internet than most Twin Citians receive.

"It was really an exercise in people taking control of the future of their communities," says Erickson.

For Jacob Rieke, it means no longer fearing for his daughters' schooling. He can now employ all the weaponry of precision farming, saving between $5,000 and $20,000 annually on seed costs alone.

For Linda Kramer, it means getting 10 times the speed of her old service for the same price, allowing her family to be "good stewards of the land." An ability to read the subtleties of a field prevents over-fertilizing, which has left most southwest Minnesota waterways too toxic for swimming. "The technology is really allowing people to do good things."

RS is also fostering commerce. A new 3D printer business in Gibbon can send data-heavy files to clients. An industrial electrician in Winthrop does work all over the world.

In nearby Gaylord, a New York company plans to turn an old elementary school into a medical college. The hope is that it will eventually house 300 students, training them to work in small towns with severe doctor shortages.

What makes co-ops different is a kinder sense of purpose, one that puts residents ahead of quarterly earnings and Wall Street ultimatums.

Says Brian Zelenak, head of the Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative: "It's about enhancing the quality of lives."

THE COUNTRYSIDE GOES PRO

Asked if he'd still be in business without high-speed internet, Kent Kelly offers a blunt reply: "No."

He's the general manager of Fortune Transportation, a testament to how even old-line industries like trucking are reliant on connectivity.

From headquarters outside Windom, Kelly runs 250 refrigerated trailers, hauling for the likes of Kraft, Anheuser-Busch, and Schwan's. He can monitor the location, speed, and deliveries of his 150 tractors in real-time. And he can keep 200 well-paying jobs in small-town Minnesota.

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Fortune's success comes courtesy of Windomnet, among the nation's first city-owned internet concerns. The company's databases handle orders 24/7, a task impossible in much of outstate, since time-outs and dropped connections corrupt files, turning orders into horrors.

Windomnet allows the city to play on a footing equal to anywhere in the world. "Pricewise, people here don't pay more than you do in a metro area," says Kelly. "But the speeds are five to 10 times faster."

The same thing could be said of Bemidji, home to Paul Bunyan Communications. It began as a telephone co-op in the 1950s, eventually moving on to TV and internet across multiple counties. "They're really transforming that entire region," says Coleman. "It's becoming a high-technology center."

One company has created a database of millions of aircraft, building custom parts for the restoration of World War II-era planes. Delta Dental is also opening a new facility, drawn by high-speed fiber that allows employees to telecommute.

Further east, Lindsey Deitz typifies another bonus for northern Minnesota: the work-from-home professional.

There's no shortage of Twin Citians who daydream of living among the splendors of Minnesota's Arrowhead. Want of jobs has always made it prohibitive. Yet it's now one of the most connected parts of the state.

Four years ago, Deitz was living with her family in Amarillo, Texas, when her husband got a job in Silver Bay. The family had always wanted to put down rural roots. They found their perfect acreage outside Finland.

At first, Deitz had no internet—a rather imposing snag, since she runs All the Nourishing Things, a holistic food and lifestyle website. "It wasn't going very well at all. I would just have to go find places that had Wi-Fi, so I didn't get very much work done."

Lake County rode to the rescue. It created Lake Connections, with the unforgiving task of bringing broadband to 11,000 residents scattered across 2,100 square miles, an enterprise no private company would attempt.

Deitz no longer has to slouch about town to earn a living. "I'm really thankful for the internet so that I can provide for my family," says the mother of two. "You can make an income from home. A lot of people leave the area because they can't find a job."

Dan Shirley is seeing a similar quality-of-life boost in neighboring Cook County, where the Arrowhead Electric Cooperative brought fiber to Minnesota's remote northeastern point.

Shirley's family has run Sawbill Canoe Outfitters outside Tofte since 1957. It operates almost entirely off the grid, using wood for heat and solar for electricity. An automated website means "we don't have to sit in front of the computer processing a reservation," he says. "We can spend more time with customers."

COURTESY OF MARK ERICKSON

In the heart of Trumpland, Mark Erickson turned to an old-school socialism practiced a century ago.

In the surrounding area, visitors are becoming permanent residents; they can now connect to the outside world.

Coleman believes this to be essential to the countryside's survival. "Seventy percent of people won't buy a house unless it has good internet service. Realtors all over the state have told me that. They see a nice house and find out there's no internet and they drive away."

This is as important to Twin Citians as it is to rural residents. Of Minnesota's 87 counties, just four—Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota, and Washington—produce more than half of the state's tax receipts. Unless the metro wants to continually float an ever needier welfare state elsewhere in Minnesota, the country must flourish.

SURMOUNTING THE LOBBYISTS

Public internet is by no means perfect. Take Lake Connections, which has proven a godsend for residents... and a bloodbath for the county.

To build it, Lake County officials borrowed mightily from the feds. The two soon began a dance of squabbling and ineptitude. When the county finally realized it was unsuited for the telecom business, Lake Connections was put to auction. The highest bid came in at $3.5 million—pocket change compared to debts close to $50 million.

RS Fiber is also looking at a $1 million

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COURTESY OF LINDSEY DIETZ

Lake Connections proved a godsend for Lindsey Deitz... and a bloodbath for Lake County.

deficit next year, leaving private sector partisans to cluck with satisfaction.

Erickson is unfazed. He says the plan called all along for the possibility of cash injections, like any start-up. At most, residents will see tax hikes of $9 a month. RS is already saving them $40-$50 a month.

Still, these red numbers bring kindling to those who believe citizens shouldn't challenge free enterprise. The telecom industry has never been shy about attacking locales that infringe on its turf. Illinois providers once tried to subvert public competition with a phone survey that asked such leading questions as, "Should tax money be allowed to provide pornographic movies for residents?"

A more subtle resistance runs through the Minnesota Legislature, where telecom employs some 50 lobbyists. The state offers matching grants to improve broadband. But most have gone to private companies' expansions into unserved areas, says Mitchell, rather than to co-ops contesting bad service. "The lobbyists want to make sure the state doesn't serve any competition."

The program is also chronically underfunded, despite hefty state surpluses. Democrats from metro districts don't hear the drumbeat of grievances. And while Republicans may represent Minnesota's hungriest regions, they've never been partial to public cures for private markets, preferring the one-size-fits-all remedy of tax cuts for all that ails.

Says Dorman, now executive director of Greater Minnesota Partnership, which promotes outstate development: "I do smile about some of the conservatives who complain about Google. They should be worried about Comcast."

These obstacles have left 250,000 homes without basic broadband, according to former state Sen. Matt Schmit (DFL-Red Wing). It's especially hard on the elderly. Telemedicine could allow them to stay in their homes, seeing specialists via the internet, rather than driving a half-day to a hospital.

"This isn't stuff that's far out," says Schmit, now a senior research fellow at the University of Minnesota. "This is happening every day today."

In the meantime, co-ops like Mille Lacs Energy are showing up with reinforcements. Out in Lake Country, using a credit card or a cash machine can be a test of wills. Residents know to avoid the web both morning and night, lest they be stuck in standstill traffic.

So Mille Lacs is running fiber to its 15,000 members. CEO Brian Zelenak believes it will give kids a better shot at getting into college, allow mom-and-pop resorts to email brochures, and keep the elderly from prematurely moving to get health care.

Even if it only allows people to work from their cabins, spending an extra day or two on gas and groceries, it will be a "significant boon," he says. "I think you will see more cabins become permanent homes."

Minnesota now has 30 co-ops diving into the internet, though Dorman worries for areas without one. Massive cord-cutting has left cable TV to hemorrhage. Without that extra revenue stream, "my fear is you're going see cable companies start to walk away."

If that happens, much of the state will be without a lifeline that's "as important as electricity or water or telephone lines," says Kramer.

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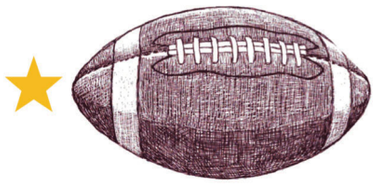

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HIDE OUT

Get the last of your warmish weather jollies in on the Bungalow Club patio

BY HANNAH SAYLE

Weighing the merits of Bungalow Club just as autumn rolls in (dragging winter behind it) is, well, unfair. To see it at its finest, you'll want to head outside.

The new restaurant in the former home of the Craftsman on East Lake Street has wisely conserved its forebear's best attribute: a vine-covered patio that feels magically secluded, though it sits mere feet from one of the city's busiest thoroughfares.

The season for experiencing this joyful cloister is rapidly closing, but we're a hardy stock, so there are likely a few more weeks of bundling up and dining in the open air. Consider this a recommendation to do so, while savoring any one of Bungalow Club's excellent cocktails. It's a tidy list of affordable classics, from the Hemingway daiquiri to the balanced Old Fashioned. The Mezcal Mule is extra smoky, a formidable twist on the milder, sweeter Moscow Mule. A Whiskey Sour boasts a crown of creamy whipped egg white, which, we learned, technically makes it a Boston sour. These cocktails—as well as a number of the beers and wines on their sizable list—hover in the $9-$10 range, so drink up, kid.

Chef Andrew Kraft, formerly of Grand Cafe, took the helm this spring, somehow resisting the urge to rename it "The Kraftsman." Instead, he and his partners, Jeremiah Dittman and Sam Rosen, opted for the low-key, borderline clandestine Bungalow Club. Keep your eyes peeled for its minimal signage—just the cryptic "TBC" lettering on the glass door.

Its culinary ethos is a bit elusive as well, though many a restaurant menu shapeshifts with the season or the whims of the chef. Where does eclectic end and unfocused begin? We can't say and don't particularly care, so long as the flow of dishes is steady and well executed.

In that regard, Bungalow Club was hit or miss: Peach Piri Piri ribs with blue cheese were a bit dry on the outside, and dull on the inside, in need of acid to cut the fat. The burrata and octopus salad was delightful, with a lemon preserve dressing that perfects the citrusy brightness of a vinaigrette without the harsh vinegar pucker. A gem lettuce salad with buttermilk dressing had croutons we wished to bag up and take home for couch-snacking, but the rest of the salad was unexpectedly salty.

All three of those dishes land on the first section of the menu, which is partitioned roughly according to first, second, and third courses. The standout starter, the Smorgasbord, is an homage to the olden days at Craftsman, back when Mike Phillips was in the kitchen carving up meats and hadn't yet left to start his beloved butchery, Red Table Meats. The Smorgasbord offerings change, but on a recent visit we marveled at the bounty of items—andouille sausage, ham hock terrine, salmon rillettes, chicken liver mousse with golden raisins, burrata with peach jam, pickled carrots, olives, and bread and butter pickles. And for the first time in the history of charcuterie, there was actually enough bread and crackers to finish the board. At $19, it is surprisingly a good deal of food for sharing.

The mezzalune ALMA GUZMAN

Pasta composes the second course, a prime placement for showing off some of the kitchen's finest work. House-made tortellini, spaghetti, mezzalune—all receive special treatment and individual flair. The tortellini comes in a sweet corn broth with spicy chorizo and shishito, a wholly unexpected melange that beguiles as you work your way through it. The mezzalune is similarly unusual, though perhaps less successful, with thin, hibiscus-colored ravioli, a brown-butter sauce with vinegar overtones, and added crunch from poppy seeds and what the menu calls "some green things" (on this occasion, microgreens and sweet peas). It was interesting to share, if overwhelming as a main dish.

THE BUNGALOW CLUB
4300 E. Lake St., Minneapolis; 612-866-3334
entrees $11-$25, drinks $8-10
thebungalowclubmpls.com

For the "entree" portion of the menu (though you could certainly order a large portion of pasta and call it a night), we found the salmon and wild rice dish to be perfect: The fillet was velvety on the inside, crisped on its edges; the wild rice offered a chewy textural foil; the broth was so rich, even with a gentle sourness, that we wound up slurping it from the bowl.

The burger (in case you needed further proof that every menu in the Twin Cities must serve a burger) was a mild disappointment. The whole of it was greasy, and the advertised "freezer slaw"—chopped cabbage softened in the freezer—all but disappeared into the mix of the double-pattied beef and American cheese. We, of course, finished every bite, which tells you everything about our self-control. A petite ramekin of French onion dip was delicious, but accompanying fingerling potatoes couldn't stamp out our wistful longing for French fries. A burger demands fries. Why split up an indomitable duo?

For dessert, we recommend the cherry clafoutis. Because clafoutis! When is the last time you saw clafoutis on the dessert menu instead of the same old (yes, delicious) tiramisu, creme brulee, pot de creme, or flourless chocolate torte? The cherries were tart, the puffy, custardy cake was sweet and mellow, and the scoop of luscious chocolate ice cream on top was a cocoa-rich delight.

For a neighborhood joint like this to survive—and don't be fooled by its Lake Street address; this is definitely a spot for nearby residents to unwind—excellent service is paramount. Bungalow Club meets this challenge handily. When we accidentally asked about ordering drinks from someone who wasn't our server (it happens!) they happily obliged us. Each employee, from the food runners to the hosts, seemed invested, though not obnoxiously so, in our experience. Servers were knowledgeable and accommodating and toed the line between checking in and leaving us to our meal.

Go and grab your space on the patio while you can. Let round after round of bubbly Spritzes keep you company as you release your grip on summer. Winter is coming, but let's hide from it a little longer in the Bungalow Club.

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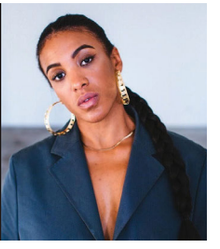


A LIST

SATURDAY Bauhaus Brew Labs pays tribute to Oktoberfest with beer. Lots of beer. **p. 22**

SUNDAY *Daily Show* correspondent Hasan Minhaj is at the State **p. 25**

THURSDAY 9.27

NERDERY

WIZARD FEST 2018

CABOOZE

This Thursday, witches and wizards will convene to drink and dance at the Cabooze. Come as your favorite *Harry Potter* character, or simply rock your house colors, whether you're a Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, or Slytherin. Order familiar magical brew from the bar; tonight's menu will include Butterbeer, Polyjuice Potion, Fire Whiskey, and Unicorn Blood. A Quidditch pong tournament will test your drinking skills, coordination, and aim (think beer pong with Quidditch ring goals). A costume contest will award the best cosplayers, and wizarding world trivia will test your knowledge. The dance floor will keep the magic going past the witching hour. Find tickets and more info at www.leopresents.com. 18+. 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. $15-$25 general admission; $30-$50 VIP packages. 917 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-6425. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

ART/GALLERY

TIES AND TETHERS

ARTISTRY

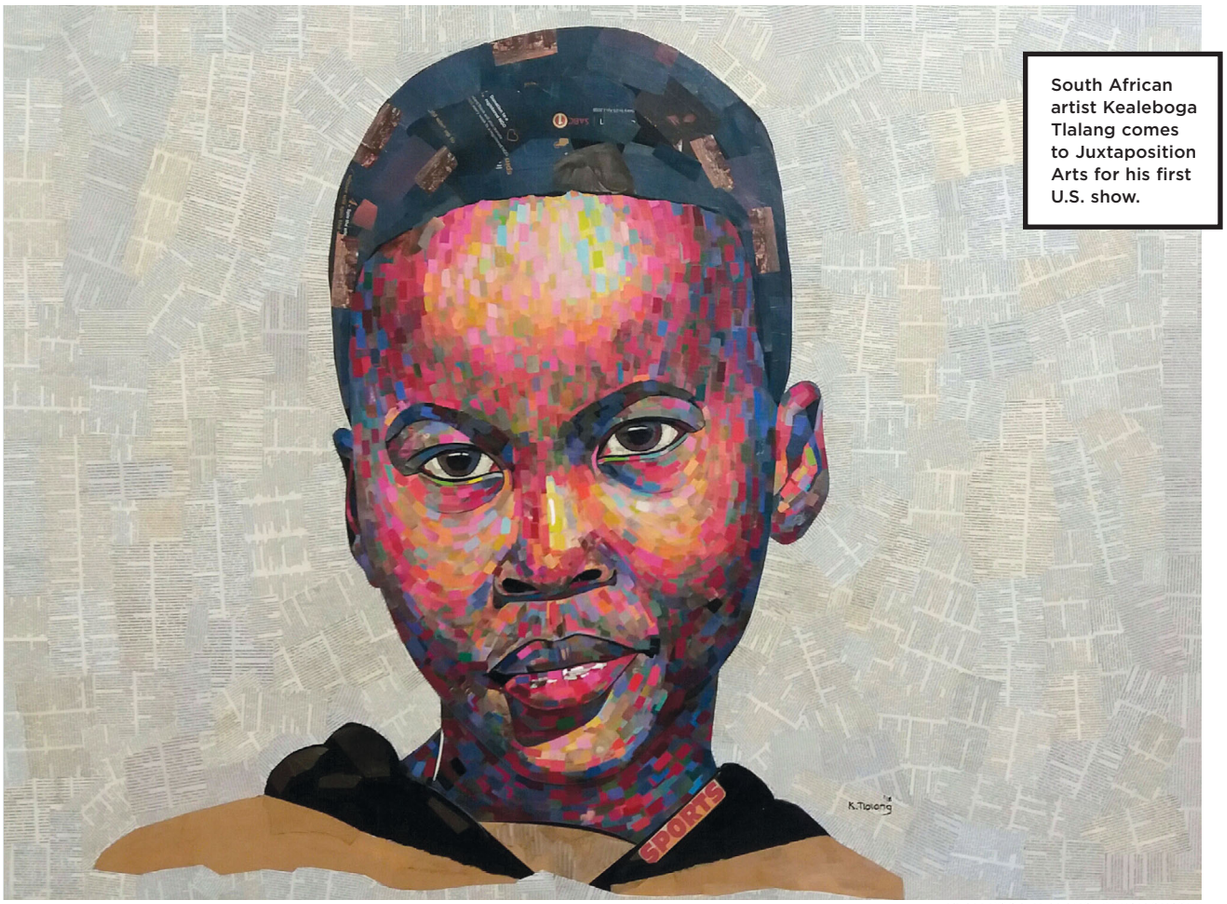
Imagination takes flight, or finds poetic grounding, in printmaker Lori Biwer-Stewart's resonant work. The self-taught artist draws from the natural world—rocks, birds, leaves, grasses—to craft linocut prints (often incorporating monoprint and collagraph techniques) in subdued tones blending representation and abstraction. In doing so, she creates pieces that invite recognition and dreaming. 1800 W. Old Shakopee Rd., Bloomington; 952-563-8575. **Through November 9 —CAMILLE LEFEVRE**

BOOKS

JULIE SCHUMACHER

MAGERS & QUINN

The English department at the fictional Payne University is near death in Julie Schumacher's new book, *The Shakespeare Requirement*. The novel revives the cantankerous Professor Fitger, who debuted in Schumacher's 2014 novel, *Dear Committee Members*, a tome that made her the first woman ever awarded the Thurber Prize for American Humor. But unlike that story, which used first-person point of view and was written in the form of recommendation letters, *The Shakespeare Requirement* invites readers to experience academia—and its incessant red tape—from multiple perspectives, including faculty, students, and the higher-ups. The English department facilities make for quite the character as well, and are clearly inspired by the University of Minnesota, where Schumacher has taught for two decades. A book about how the English faculty struggle to agree on a "statement of vision" before the well-endowed econ department takes over what's left of their budget and office space might not sound riveting, but thanks to Schumacher's artistry, you'll be amused and entertained all the way through. 7 p.m. Free. 3038 Hennepin Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-822-4611. **—ERICA RIVERA**



South African artist Kealeboga Tlalang comes to Juxtaposition Arts for his first U.S. show.

KEALEBOGA TLALANG, *DREAM CHASER*

FRIDAY 9.28

DANCE/PERFORMANCE

DANGER ROUSSE

OPEN EYE FIGURE THEATRE

Dancer/choreographer Sally Rousse wants to delight you. In her latest performance, *Danger Rousse*, the nimble dance maker has plenty of unexpected moves in store, including dangling from the ceiling and bopping around inside and outside. Expect some danger, but also a good dose of whimsy from Rousse, who knows how to incorporate humor into her pieces. A co-founder of James Sewell Ballet, Rousse has most recently been an artist-in-residence at the Cowles Center, where she curated an evening of dance that flipped the script of what a performance space looks like, employing hallways, balconies, and other unexpected places. You can anticipate the same sort of out-of-the box thinking with her latest effort, a work in progress

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 ▶

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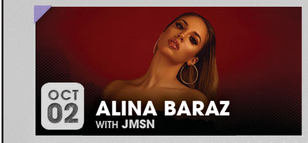
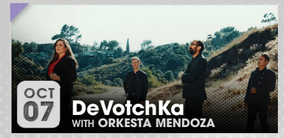
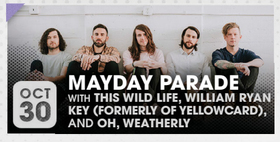
BEST DANCE CLUB (READER'S CHOICE), BEST CONCERT VENUE (READER'S CHOICE) - *CITY PAGES 2018*







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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

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W/ LAZEAR, BATHTUB CIG, CAVE LIGHT
MONDAY, OCTOBER 1

DREAM WIFE
W/ RUSSO, STRANGE RELATIONS
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2

DANCE WITH THE DEAD
W/ DANIEL DELUXE
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3

RYLEY WALKER
W/ Health&Beauty
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4

THE SCORE
W/ THE ORPHAN THE POET, birthday
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6

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HEAVEN AND EARTH TOUR
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(NOV. 3 SHOW SOLD OUT)

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FLOW STATE WORLD TOUR
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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

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FALL 2018 TOUR
W/ PAUL CHERRY
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2

DJANGO DJANGO
W/ THE SHACKS
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4

AN EVENING WITH BELLY
2018 DOVE TOUR
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5

JADE BIRD
W/ FIELD REPORT (SOLO)
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6

TURF CLUB UP NEXT

SWINGIN' UTTERS
W/ THE LAST GANG, THE RIGHT HERE
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

SHOOTER JENNINGS
W/ SAM CASSIDY
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

WE WERE PROMISED JETPACKS
W/ JENN CHAMPION
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

JAKE JONES, SAVANNAH SMITH, AND THE FEDERALES
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

WILL HOGE
W/ RYAN CULWELL
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

SAM EVIAN
W/ KATIE VON SCHLEICHER
MONDAY, OCTOBER 1

CARBON LEAF
W/ FREDDY & FRANCINE
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2

THE PRESETS
HI VIZ 2018 TOUR
W/ BLOOD RED SHOES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3

AROUND TOWN

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THEATER

THE VISIT

MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM

TONY NELSON

Frank Theatre sets Friedrich Durrenmatt's disturbing masterpiece *The Visit* at the Minnesota Transportation Museum, giving it a site-specific treatment starring Katherine Ferrand as Claire Zachanassian, one of the most fascinating characters in modern theater. If you aren't familiar with the plot, don't research it! You're in for a ride as you watch this indictment of humanity play out. The dark nature of the play is no stranger for Frank's artistic director Wendy Knox, who often produces challenging material. The museum itself is located in the Jackson Street Roundhouse, one of the last fully functional railroad roundhouses of its kind in the country. It was erected by the Northern Railway in 1907, and the real trains inside will provide an added experience to the show. Find tickets at www.brownpapertickets.com. 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays. $22-$25. 193 Pennsylvania Ave. E., St. Paul; 651-228-0263. **Through October 21 —SHEILA REGAN**

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ▶

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SEBASTIAN MANISCALCO

HISTORIC STATE THEATRE

Sebastian Maniscalco has been growing his following both locally and nationally for years, having performed at Pantages in 2016 and a sold-out show at the State Theatre last spring. This year he's doing two shows at the State. Since the last time he came to town, Maniscalco has become a father, released his autobiography, *Stay Hungry*, and wrapped film roles in serious pictures working alongside the likes of Robert DeNiro and Al Pacino. But just because his star is burning brighter doesn't mean he's softened his tone. Whether he's discussing his distaste for Uber ("It's like hitchhiking with your phone"), confusion over why people think it's okay act like assholes in public, or other parents' lack of social cues, he's unapologetically candid, and doesn't give anyone a free pass. 7 and 9:30 p.m. $43.75-$154. 805 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007. **—PATRICK STRAIT**

SATURDAY 9.29

DANCE

PARKING RAMP PROJECT

HEALTH PARTNERS PARKING RAMP

Pramila Vasudevan and her company Aniccha Arts invade a Bloomington parking ramp for their latest immersive and disruptive intervention. Immigration, transitions, space, and bodies and the weight they carry and displace are at work in this installation piece. Movement, site, live created sound, and the setting sun integrate to create an experience as tactile as it is intellectual, physical as it is emotional. In a place for cars, where nothing really happens, stories are created and shared and surroundings are transformed. 6:30, 7:30, and 8:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Free. 8171 30th Ave. S., Bloomington. **Also Sunday —CAMILLE LEFEVRE**

FESTIVAL

SCHWANDTOBERFEST

BAUHAUS BREW LABS

For the past five years, the Schwandt family at Bauhaus Brew Labs have focused on creating German-influenced lagers served up in their festive Northeast taproom. Oktoberfest—make that Schwandtoberfest—showcases their strengths perfectly. Saturday's party will celebrate all things German

Dear Gaza raises funds for medical supplies and more.

DAVID MAXWELL

and all things Bauhaus in a single ticketed event. Attendees get a special stein to swig their märzen-style lager from; Gerhards, New Bohemia, and Herbivorous Butcher will serve traditional German foods; and Brass Barn Polka Band and Viva Knievel will rock the stage. In addition to the party's eponymous beer, the brewery will have a rotation of flagships and special infusions on tap. Games like hammerschlagen and stein raising will also entertain. Find tickets and more info at dojour.us. Noon to midnight. $34 (includes a beer stein and three refills); $10 general admission/designated driver; kids free. 1315 Tyler St. NE, Minneapolis; 612-276-6911. **—LOREN GREEN**

BENEFIT/FESTIVAL

DEAR GAZA BLOCK PARTY

WEST 24TH STREET

Now in its fourth year, the Dear Gaza Block Party is a blend of art, performance, and music celebrating Palestinian culture. Spoken-word instrumentalist Taylor Seaberg, hip-hop activist Tufawon, and rapper CRASHprez will be taking the stage to provide tunes, as will Talia Knight, Click Bait, Dua, and DJ Wndrlnd. An art installation will showcase work by Chicago-based artist Amanda Assaley. Funds this year will once again go to America Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) through their In-Kind Medical & Relief Program, which provides basic hospital items and life necessities to folks living on the Gaza Strip. Last year's festival raised over $20,000, which went on to become $1.3 million dollars' worth of medical supplies. Find more info at www.deargaza.com. 3 to 10 p.m. Free; $10-$20 suggested donation. The block party is located on 24th Street between Lyndale and Garfield Avenues in south Minneapolis. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

ART/GALLERY

KEALEBOGA TLALANG

JUXTAPOSITION ARTS

Kealeboga Tlalang creates mixed-media pieces that are more than the sum of their parts. In each portrait fine lines, newspaper clippings, and colorful blocks come together to create surprisingly expressive works. The South African artist began drawing pictures as a child for students and teachers as a way to make money to pay for lunch. He later earned a college scholarship to study mathematics and science, but eventually returned to artwork, blending all three passions into his portraits. His show at Juxtaposition Arts will be his first solo exhibition in the U.S. During his residency in the north Minneapolis gallery, he will also lead workshops and apprenticeships with youth artists. There will be an opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m Saturday, September 29, and an artist's talk at 7 p.m. on Thursday, October 4. Free. 2007 Emerson Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-588-1148. **Through November 10 —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

COMEDY

KATHLEEN MADIGAN

PANTAGES THEATRE

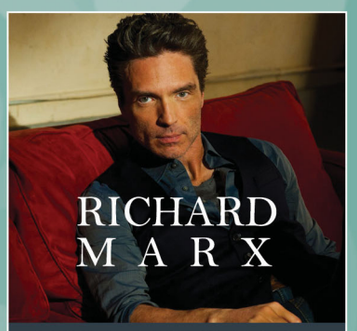
Kathleen Madigan, like many comics, is talking a bit more about politics in her set these days. "Because it's so in our face," she says. "You can't even get on Twitter without hearing something about something. That's why I don't want Oprah as our next president. I don't want a loud person. I want a quiet person that does their job." Like it or not, she points out, we're all in this. "Even if you say, 'I'm going to ignore Trump.' Well, good luck with that." Trump is not taking up that much of her act, though. "I'm mostly talking about the smaller things I've talked about forever: my

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 ▶

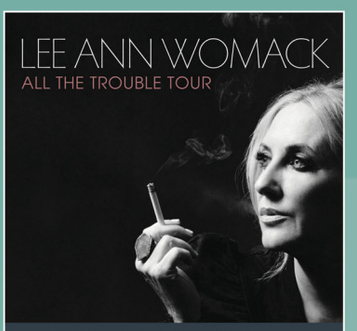
SUE MCLEAN & ASSOCIATES

OCT 14 | FITZGERALD

OCT 20 | PANTAGES



NOV 3 | FITZGERALD



NOV 8 | THE CEDAR

DEC 7 | THE CEDAR

DEC 9 | PANTAGES

MAR 29 | STATE THEATRE

APR 23 | PANTAGES

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THE WINNER WILL BE CROWNED AT ARL ON SATURDAY, SEPT. 29th at 2pm

THE WINNER GOES HOME WITH THIS HAND MADE 9X12 INDIAN MAHAL!

Surly plans to thrash harder in Wisconsin this year.

COURTESY EVENT ORGANIZERS

CONTINUED FROM SATURDAY ▶

family, traveling, and the silly things in life. And even the Trump stuff I keep light and silly. I'm not trying to change anyone's mind, because you're never going to change anyone's mind. I just try and point out the absurd." 6:30 and 9 p.m. $37.50-$42.50. 710 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007. —P.F. WILSON

FESTIVAL

SURLY DARKNESS DAY 2018

SOMERSET AMPHITHEATER

For longtime fans of Surly Brewing, the company's annual Darkness Day has become something of a homecoming. The event, which celebrates the seasonal release the brewery's highly coveted interpretation of a Russian imperial stout, has historically been held at Surly's original location in Brooklyn Center. This year the party's surging popularity has relocated it to Wisconsin's Somerset Amphitheater. The new grounds allow for vastly expanded possibilities. Now spread over an entire weekend, Darkness Day will continue to feature an authorized bottle share, as well as guest taps from a wide spectrum of local and national brewers. A fleet of food trucks will supplement the copious consumption of hops and barley. Contributing a scorching soundtrack, nine metal/thrash bands will command two stages, including Sick Of It All and Carcass. And in recognition of the lengthened commute from the Twin Cities, camping options are available and highly encouraged. For all the changes, though, the festival remains focused on fostering camaraderie around the launch of Darkness. Not only can partygoers procure bottles before the official Halloween release, but three variant styles will also be offered exclusively to attendees. Find tickets and more info at surlybrewing.com. Noon to midnight. $35 general admission; $120-$200 bottle packages. Onsite camping is $25. 495 Main St., Somerset, WI; 715-247-2004. —BRAD RICHASON

SUNDAY 9.30

COMEDY

HASAN MINHAJ

HISTORIC STATE THEATRE

When comedian Hasan Minhaj took the podium to throw shade at Donald Trump during the 2017 White House Correspondents' Dinner, the moment held a significance deeper than the usual political roasting. Here was the son of two Indian American immigrants lampooning a president who has continually displayed a xenophobic fixation on foreigners. But even before that high-profile skewering, comedy fans had been familiar with Minhaj's satiric skills thanks to his role as a senior correspondent on *The Daily Show*. With the release of his first standup special on Netflix, *Homecoming King*, Minhaj further expanded his profile (and picked up a prestigious Peabody Award in the process). While his career momentum continues to build—he has a much-anticipated weekly comedy show on Netflix, *Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj*, scheduled to debut in late October—the comic is taking a victory lap of sorts on the standup circuit. Minhaj's routine can be counted on to include hilarious cultural observations and absurd pop-culture obsessions. 7 p.m. $29.50-$75. 805 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007. —BRAD RICHASON

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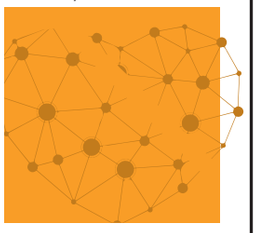
American Classic Comedy



MARJORIE PRIME
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Drama

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May 31 – Jun 23, 2019
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Curt Obeda & Camile Baudoin
Wednesday, October 3 • 7:30pm
Curtiss A & The Dark
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SAT, OCT 13

BENEFIT FOR DAVE HILL
WITH HOOPSNAKES
And Guest Reneé Austin & Lisa Wenger
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WARNER BROS.

HEADY YETI

Smallfoot reaches for complexity but falls short

BY TONY LIBERA

It's obvious from the outset that the makers of *Smallfoot* wanted to tackle new territory. The man-meets-yeti animated comedy opens from the perspective of Migo (Channing Tatum), a young yeti living at the peak of a Himalayan mountain, and positions humans as mythological creatures. The approach is novel; whether the movie succeeds is up for debate.

Migo explains to the audience that he and his yeti compatriots have carved out a pretty idyllic existence up in the clouds, working together to make the town run and finding great satisfaction in their (seemingly nonsensical) labor. Migo loves it, but he soon learns that ignorance is bliss.

The yetis don't ask too many questions about life, deferring instead to a set of infallible laws carved in stones by yeti chiefs of the past and present. The stones state, among other things, that there is nothing below the clouds, that the sun is a giant snail that must be awoken each morning, and that the creature known as a "Smallfoot" is just a fable. So when Migo, a dutiful adherent to yeti law and lore, stumbles upon a real-life smallfoot (human) out in the wild, his world begins to unravel.

Meanwhile, at the bottom of the mountain in a Nepalese town, a faded-glory Steve Irwin type named Percy Patterson (James Corden) decides to throw away any remaining integrity he has and fake a yeti sighting. But it isn't too long before he finds himself face-to-face with the real thing.

Smallfoot looks and feels like something geared toward younger children, but it becomes surprisingly complex as it moves along. That's not necessarily a good thing here. While nuance is always appreciated in a kids' movie, the ideas being relayed will likely go way over the head of the target audience. The crowd of abnormally restless toddlers and preschoolers at the early screening speaks to that. And if nobody is receiving the message, can it be that effective?

Broadly, this is a story about the importance of curiosity and questioning the world, but *Smallfoot* is also arguably a treatise against organized religion. It's not antagonistic by any means, and the movie is actually pretty understanding when it comes to religion's role in society at one point in time. Nevertheless, religion comes off as an antiquated system that may no longer give the answers we need.

Such anti-religious overtones are pretty uncommon in any major American film, let alone a kids' movie, so it is nice to see the outlook being represented. But the young moviegoers much preferred watching the screwball, Wile E. Coyote antics, opting to run around like disinterested maniacs during the many scenes of existential questioning.

You can't wholly blame the filmmakers for their ambition. In theory, *Smallfoot*'s themes could have worked, and it's not wholly terrible: Tatum is wonderful as always and there are some tender moments. It's just the pacing, some lackluster jokes, a couple of truly awful vocal performances, and a handful of songs that may be some of the most odious in kid movie history—and that's saying something—that make for a mediocre outing.

SMALLFOOT
directed by Karey Kirkpatrick
area theaters, now open

Kudos to Warner Animation Group for trying. The bones are there, which makes it all the more clear that Pixar could have done this same story 10 times better.

THEATER

FRANKENSTEIN'S FINE

Guthrie's monster take doesn't quite catch fire

DAN NORMAN

BY JAY GABLER

FRANKENSTEIN — PLAYING WITH FIRE
Guthrie Theater
818 S. Second St., Minneapolis
Through October 27; 612-377-2224

Playwright Barbara Field has a long history at the Guthrie Theater, but by far her most-seen play is *A Christmas Carol*, which served as the Guthrie's text for decades until being replaced by Crispin Whittell's script in 2010. Audiences may get some familiar feelings at her *Frankenstein — Playing With Fire* (1988), which has more than a couple similarities to the haunted holiday chestnut.

Like Scrooge, Victor Frankenstein (Zachary Fine) is an old man who cast joy aside in a single-minded passion that could never heal his youthful wounds. Whereas Scrooge was a money-grubber, though, Frankenstein sold his soul to science (in 2018, a much more old-fashioned concept). The result was his own personal ghoul, who in Field's vision serves as his interlocutor while the two tumble back through time.

Unlike the Ghost of Christmas Past, Frankenstein's creature (Elijah Alexander) looks upon a younger version of himself as he and his creator revisit the events that led to the tense Arctic confrontation where we first meet them. Copies of Frankenstein's blue coat, stolen from him by the creature and subsequently replaced, multiply as the maker and his monster behold young Frankenstein (Ryan Colbert) and, eventually, a freshly reanimated creature (Jason Rojas).

In what might be the longest ever take on the "talking killer" trope, Frankenstein essentially holds his reanimated rogue at gunpoint for two hours. This onstage dramaturgy gets a little tedious, but the well-known narrative is strong enough that we gladly follow along to see them play the hits: the grave-robbing, the electric activation, the freak's flight and his fateful return.

Director Rob Melrose conducts his cast across a set that owes more to the clean, modern aesthetics of '50s science-fiction flicks than the '30s horror movies most famously associated with Mary Shelley's 200-year-old novel.

Alexander and Fine are both, well, fine, but we're grateful when Robert Dorfman arrives as young Victor's professor, a comic character whose hints at thwarted desires make him far more fascinating than the play's transparent protagonists. Rojas is also compelling as the aching, confused creature who will ultimately mature into the poised Alexander.

Field's *Frankenstein* gets the job done, with the help of Melrose's moody production and Cliff Caruthers' ominous underscore, but as a latter-day adaptation, it suffers by comparison to Kate Hamill's new take on *Little Women*, now playing at the Jungle Theater. The source material is very different, true—but *Frankenstein*'s inconsequential Elizabeth (Amelia Pedlow) feels like a character Hamill wouldn't have stood for. Maybe what most needs to be told right now is not the story of who Frankenstein invented, but the story of who invented Frankenstein.

Wednesday, September 26
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MOLSKY'S MOUNTAIN DRIFTERS *with Adam Kiesling*
Doors 7pm • Show 7:30pm • All Ages • $22 adv/$25 dos

Thursday, September 27
The Cedar Presents
An Evening with **RITA COOLIDGE**
Doors 7pm • Show 7:30pm • All Ages • $40 GA/$50 Center Section

Friday, September 28
The Cedar Presents
DAVID WILCOX *with special guest*
Doors 7pm • Show 8pm • All Ages • $25 adv/$28 dos

Saturday, September 29
The Cedar Presents
OVFWRD *Album Release with Hardcore Crayons*
Doors 7pm • Show 8pm • All Ages • $12 GA

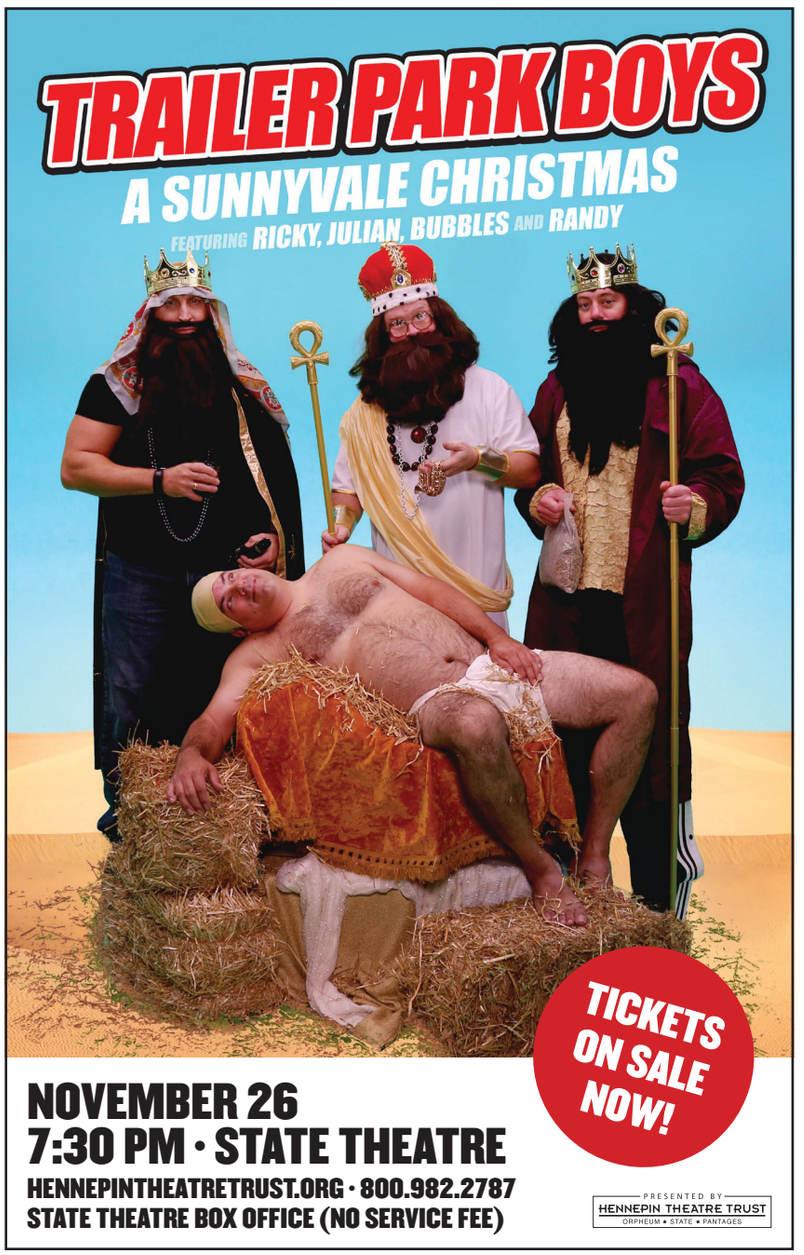
Sunday, September 30
The Cedar and Moon Palace Present
CALVIN JOHNSON *with Vacation and Sauna Accident (At Moon Palace Books)*
Doors 7:30pm • Show 8pm • All Ages • $10 adv/$12 dos

Wednesday, October 3
The Cedar Presents
ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER *with Pill and Jillian Rae*
Doors 7pm • Show 7:30pm • All Ages • $20 adv/$25 dos

Thursday, October 4
The Cedar Presents
JIM LAUDERDALE *with special guest*
Doors 7pm • Show 7:30pm • All Ages • $25 GA

Friday, October 5
First Avenue presents
MURDER BY DEATH *with Mutts*
Doors 7pm • Show 8pm • All Ages • $20 adv/$25 dos

416 Cedar Ave S Minneapolis, MN 55454 • 612.338.2674



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STREET *Style*

MINNSTAFASHION MN Fashion Week kicks off at the Foshay **BY AMY GEE**

SEFIA DEDEFO
20, STUDENT

What are you wearing?
Zara fanny pack and jacket, Forever 21 dress, H&M shoes.

Describe your style:
Street style, kinda crazy, open to anything.

If you could inherit anyone's wardrobe, whose would it be?
Rihanna.

Current style crush:
Myself.

One thing in your closet you can't live without:
My denim jacket. I wear it every day.

COOPER FELIPE
19, MODEL

What are you wearing?
Hat and bag from Shag Studio, everything else thrifted from Savers.

Describe your style:
Avant garde meets retro dance freak.

If you could inherit anyone's wardrobe, whose would it be?
Lady Gaga.

Current style crush:
@uglyworldwide on Instagram.

One thing in your closet you can't live without:
Sunglasses.

RACHEL MUNSON
28, ETSY SHOP OWNER

What are you wearing?
New Look top, skirt and necklace from ASOS, Forever 21 shoes, purse from Sheln.

Describe your style:
Edgy and a hint of girly.

If you could inherit anyone's wardrobe, whose would it be?
Perrie Edwards from Little Mix.

Current style crush:
Blake Lively.

One thing in your closet you can't live without:
My Adidas, or white sneakers in general.

PRIYANKA PREMO
30, ATTORNEY

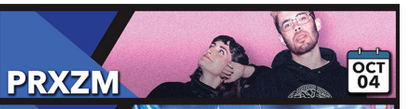
What are you wearing?
Jacket from Marshalls, jumpsuit from Primp, Forever 21 turtleneck, Warby Parker glasses, Zara bag, Clarks shoes.

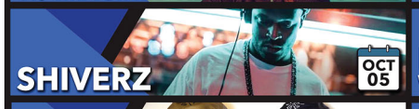
Describe your style:
My style is my creative expression. Whatever I'm feeling that day, whatever my mood is.

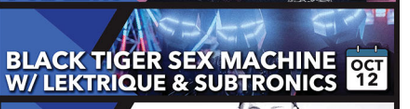
If you could inherit anyone's wardrobe, whose would it be?
Jane Aldridge of Sea of Shoes.

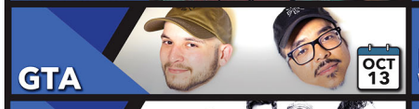
Current style crush:
I'm just feeling myself lately.

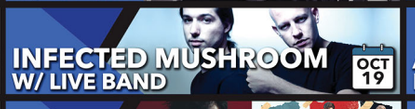
SKYWAY THEATRE PRESENTS

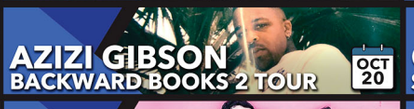


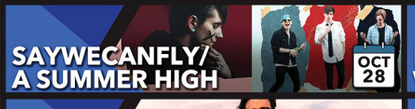












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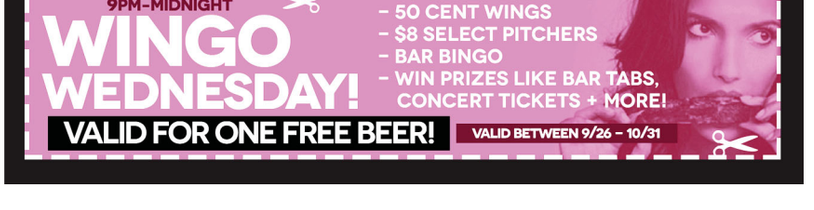

MATT ROBERTS

TALENT SHOW

American Idol and *The Voice* led Preston Gunderson on, then passed. What happens next?

BY JIM WALSH

This isn't exactly the music career Preston Gunderson envisioned for himself.

The harried troubadour's gig in Stillwater the night before—one of 160 he plays every year—had been canceled, which the 28-year-old Virginia, Minnesota native only learned about after he arrived at the club, so he headed back to his apartment and ended up rescuing some drunk friends in Uptown in the middle of the night.

Gunderson is happy to be playing, teaching, recording, and connecting. But eight years ago, he dreamed of his songs reaching millions via the talent show machines *The Voice* and *American Idol*, which he semi-successfully auditioned for and signed his life away to for a while. That all ended after his last audition, when a judge told him something that's stuck in his craw ever since.

"I'd already been through [the audition ringer], but they were like, 'Come back and do it again,' and I did—in Chicago this time," he says, sitting in a Minneapolis coffee shop. "Spent my own money to go down there, because I believed they wanted me to be a part of it. I made it through the first initial things, and the woman was like, 'Hey, we're not going to use you this year.' I remember those words just sticking in my brain: 'Use' me. I just felt like... I don't know. It ruffled my feathers and it made me feel kind of like a little pawn.

"Don't get me wrong, I get that it's a wonderful opportunity in many ways. It can also be a thing that handcuffs you a little bit, too. The whole experience will make you question your abilities, your writing, maybe even why you're doing it, if no one's listening, or make you wonder if you're ever going to write that song that finally fulfills you."

Gunderson grew up on the Iron Range, where he fell in love with performing and music via his mother, a musician who performed on USO tours and taught piano in and around Virginia. He started writing songs at six, made his first record in seventh grade, his second in high school and, while attending St. Scholastica in Duluth and studying in Ireland, wrote and recorded two more releases, which charted on the iTunes pop charts.

"When I did *The Voice*, back when I was 21, I was a casting finalist," he says. "They were doing the auditions in Minneapolis, and it wasn't like the cattle call where there's hundreds and hundreds of people, it was a private audition for the producers. I had to do three of them, and the next thing you know they're, 'Hey, we're going to send you to Hollywood, where do you want to be picked up?' I said, 'Hibbing.' They said, 'Oh... We'll pick you up in Minneapolis.'

"You go into this with a big heart, and you have all these expectations, or not even expectations, but these dreams, and I made it there and people were getting weeded out and cut down and just eventually I didn't get on a team. I didn't make that cut, and it was like... I remember thinking to myself, 'Man, maybe I'm just not good enough.'"

Though he laughs about it now, Gunderson's dreams were dashed, as *The Voice* contestants of the moment went on to fleeting TV and touring fame, and careers.

"As a 21-year-old kid, I'll tell you, it was pretty heartbreaking," he says. "Because when you're younger, you don't know if you're ever going to have another opportunity like that. Is this the shot? They always say that in your life, you can have a moment that will define you. And here I was, 21 years old, and my moment was crumbling. Coming back to everyday life on the Range in northern Minnesota was the toughest part, because one moment you're out in Hollywood, thinking, 'This is it!' And a few weeks later, you're back in your hometown."

The experience left Gunderson more wised-up about show biz, music, music criticism, competition, and happiness itself. "A couple years after that I just decided I'm not going to do that again

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and to focus on me. I moved to the Cities and started doing music full-time to pay rent. I was cutting my teeth in rooms playing to four people who didn't really care or listen, but every once in a while someone would say, 'Wow, that was really good.' And that was something that kept me going for a while.

"Then I was approached by a producer who used to work for *The Voice* who had switched over to *American Idol*, and he had said he loved me and that he hoped it had worked out on the last show and he asked me to come try out for *American Idol*, and I did and I was on TV for a short burst. Once again, they were kind about it. They were like, 'That was really good. You can tell that you're a musician, and that you work on your craft, but you're not quite what we're looking for.' I did a Ray LaMontagne song, and they were like, 'The whole time you were doing it, I was like, this is Ray LaMontagne, this isn't Preston Gunderson.'"

Earlier this month, Gunderson released his latest self-made EP, *Wake Up*. He and he alone owns the rights to the music on that EP, but that wasn't the case when he signed on to be a "character" on *The Voice* and *American Idol*.

"It was about 80 pages of legal jargon," he says. "I was really intimidated by it, so we went to our family lawyer. He's not an entertainment lawyer or anything, but he read the whole thing and by the end I just sat there and I said, 'It kind of sounds like they have control over me.' He's like, 'Yeah, that's about right.' I think it was because you're put on a stage in front of six million people, a platform, TV, they would get to control a lot of the money that would come in from streaming and CD sales. There was a percentage I'd make, but it was small.

"That's one of those things where they'd say, 'Big risk, big reward' kind of thing. If you win, you're not that worried about it, because you're going to have shows booked for you in front of audiences that are excited to hear you, you're going to be on the road doing the thing. But when you don't win, it can also handcuff you. My contract was voided, because I didn't air, I wasn't under that, which was good."

In the end, the question hangs: Whose opinions are more valid—the talent-show judges or the fans who happen upon Gunderson in a coffee shop or bar?

"One thing I learned is from Dave Grohl, who said, 'It's amazing when 80,000 people are in a stadium, singing your words. But what's more amazing than that is that 80,000 people are singing the exact same words for 80,000 different reasons.'"

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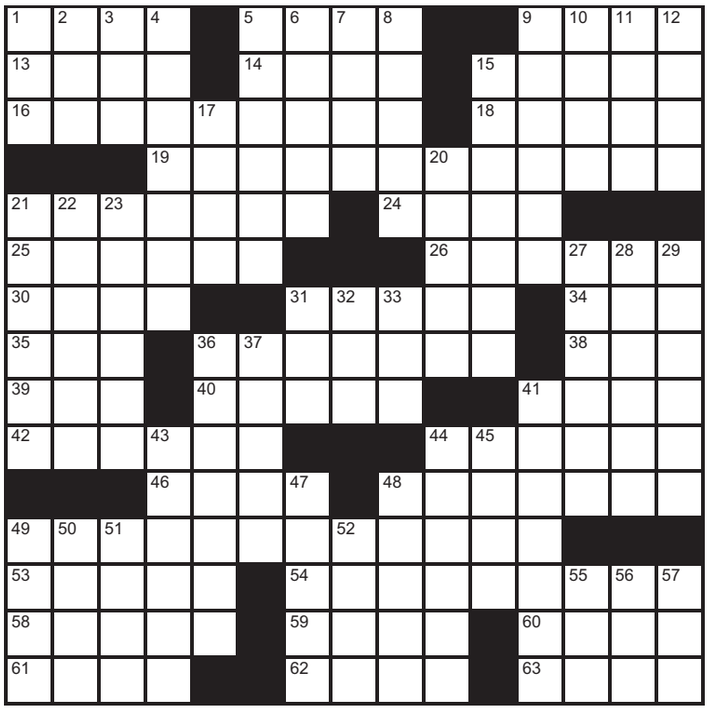

BELATEDLY

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

1 Squad goals
5 Evite reply
9 Hint of future events
13 Beam
14 Water container
15 Sliced (down)
16 Nudge a loser?
18 Chess grandmaster Viswanathan
19 Unwillingness to listen to anything but Motown?
21 Tantrum-throwing tennis legend
24 McGregor of "Christopher Robin"
25 More upset
26 Award for James Harden
30 Just kinda meh
31 Show backer
34 Barcelona bruin
35 Island home
36 Steal somebody else's computer program?
38 Wallop
39 Home Depot rival
40 Theme park with Spaceship Earth
41 It's a long story
42 Shopworn saying
44 Really sore
46 Master of a field
48 Beat, in a joust
49 Oil up some dudes?
53 Throw out there
54 Yitzhak's gas?
58 Fabric selections
59 Je ne sais quoi
60 Little scrape
61 Change for a ten
62 Hot dog breath?
63 Tear apart

Down

1 Take another trip round the sun
2 Sick as a dog
3 Multitude
4 Accountable, as secrecy
5 Nine Inch Nails mastermind Trent
6 Stockholmer
7 Heads or tails?
8 1984 worker
9 Daiquiri flavor
10 Said
11 Smidgen of progress
12 Strong current
15 Accounts ___
17 Merch
20 Humiliated, on the court
21 Minor setback
22 Catcher's position
23 Seven days from Palm Sunday
27 Type of jacket
28 Winners flash them
29 Cup of dal, e.g.
31 "Fresh Off the Boat" channel
32 Certain G.I.
33 Comprehended
36 Job descriptions?
37 The fat lady's milieu
41 Do a TaskRabbit task, say
43 They've got a lot of talent
44 Bless
45 "Street Fighter" babe Li
47 Intl. delegate
48 Like the city
49 Gray wolf
50 Stratford-___-Avon
51 Spitefulness
52 Big party
55 Stunned reaction
56 Fractionth of a yen
57 "View of a Pig" poet Hughes

Last Week's Answer

M	O	M	S		T	A	R	M	A	C		F	I	V	E
A	N	A	T		E	R	O	I	C	A		T	H	I	S
V	A	R	Y	G	L	I	T	T	E	R		D	E	N	S
	D	I	E	U				T	R	O	D		A	C	E
V	A	N	S	A	V	A	G	E		L	A	U	R	E	N
I	R	E		M	O	R	O	N			N	S	Y	N	C
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			V	I	K	E	H	A	M	M	E	R			
W	I	S	E	M	A	N		N	A	S		P	O	T	S
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R	E	N		L	E	N	T				P	O	G	O	
E	Y	E	D		V	E	I	L	D	I	A	M	O	N	D
N	O	R	I		E	X	M	O	O	R		P	A	T	E
G	U	Y	S		N	T	E	S	T	S		S	L	O	W

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10pm : kiss the tiger night of joy, d mills

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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Brezsny

ARIES (March 21–April 19): Do you have any skills at living on the edge between the light and the dark? Are you curious about what the world might look like and how people would treat you if you refused to divide everything up into that which helps you and that which doesn't help you? Can you imagine how it would feel if you loved your life just the way it is and not wish it were different from what it is? Please note: People less courageous than you might prefer you to be less courageous. But I hope you'll stay true to the experiment of living on the edge between the light and the dark.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20): According to Popbitch.com, most top-charting pop songs are in a minor key. In light of this fact, I encourage you to avoid listening to pop songs for the next three weeks. In my astrological opinion, it's essential that you surround yourself with stimuli that don't tend to make you sad and blue, that don't influence you to interpret your experience through a melancholic, mournful filter. To accomplish the assignments that life will be sending you, you need to at least temporarily cultivate a mood of crafty optimism.

GEMINI (May 21–June 20): Gemini regent Queen Victoria (1819–1901) wore crotchless underwear made of linen. A few years ago, Britain's Museums, Libraries, and Archives Council accorded them "national designated status," an official notice that means they are a national treasure. If I had the power, I would give your undergarments an equivalent acknowledgment. The only evidence I would need to make this bold move would be the intelligence and expressiveness with which you are going to wield your erotic sensibilities in the coming weeks.

CANCER (June 21–July 22): I've taken a break from socializing, my fellow Cancerian. In fact, I'm on sabbatical from my regular rhythm. My goal for the coming days is to commune with my past and review the story of my life. Rather than fill my brain up with the latest news and celebrity gossip, I am meditating on my own deep dark mysteries. I'm mining for secrets that I might be concealing from myself. In accordance with the astrological omens, I suggest that you follow my lead. You might want to delve into boxes of old mementoes or reread emails from years ago. You could get in touch with people who are no longer part of your life even though they were once important to you. How else could you get into intimate contact with your eternal self?

LEO (July 23–Aug. 22): Here's a quote from *A Map of Misreading*, a book by renowned literary critic Harold Bloom: "Where the synecdoche of tessera made a totality, however illusive, the metonymy of kenosis breaks this up into discontinuous fragments." What the cluck did Harold Bloom just say?! I'm not being anti-intellectual when I declare this passage to be pretentious drivel. In the coming days, I urge you Leos to draw inspiration from my response to Bloom. Tell the truth about nonsense. Don't pretend to appreciate jumbled or over-complicated ideas. Expose bunk and bombast. Be kind, if you can, but be firm. You're primed to be a champion of down-to-earth communication.

VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22): A data research company, Priceonomics, suggests that Monday is the most productive day of the week and that October is the most productive month of the year. My research suggests that while Capricorns tend to be the most consistently productive of all the signs in the zodiac, Virgos often outstrip them for a six-week period during the end of each September and throughout October. Furthermore, my intuition tells me that you Virgos now have an extraordinary capacity to turn good ideas into practical action. I conclude, therefore, that you are about to embark on a surge of industrious and high-quality work. (P.S.: This October has five Mondays.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 22): Biologists are constantly unearthing new species, although not new in the sense of having just appeared on our planet. In fact, they're animals and plants that have existed for millennia. But they've never before been noticed and identified by science. Among recent additions to our ever-growing knowledge are an orchid in Madagascar that smells like champagne, an electric blue tarantula in the Guyana rain forest, and a Western Australian grass that has a flavor resembling salt and vinegar potato chips. I suspect you'll be making metaphorically comparable discoveries in the coming weeks, Libra: evocative beauty that you've been blind to and interesting phenomena that have been hiding in plain sight.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23–Nov. 21): There is no such thing as a plant that blooms continuously. Phases of withering and dormancy are just as natural as phases of growth. I bring this fact to your attention to help you remain poised as you go through your own period of withering followed by dormancy. You should accept life's demand that you slow down and explore the mysteries of fallowness. You should surrender sweetly to stasis and enjoy your time of rest and recharging. That's the best way to prepare for the new cycle of growth that will begin in a few weeks.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21): If you were ever going to win a contest that awarded you a free vacation to an exotic sanctuary, it would probably happen during the next three weeks. If a toy company would ever approach you about developing a line of action figures and kids' books based on your life, it might also be sometime soon. And if you have ever had hopes of converting your adversaries into allies, or getting support and backing for your good original ideas, or finding unexpected inspiration to fix one of your not-so-good habits, those opportunities are now more likely than they have been for some time.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 19): An 81-year-old Capricorn man named James Harrison has donated his unique blood on 1,173 occasions. Scientists have used it to make medicine that prevents Rhesus disease in unborn babies, thereby healing more than 2.4 million kids and literally saving thousands of lives. I don't expect you to do anything nearly as remarkable. But I do want to let you know that the coming weeks will be a favorable time to lift your generosity and compassion to the next level. Harrison would serve well as your patron saint.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18): On a spring morning some years ago, a smoky aroma woke me from a deep sleep. Peering out my bedroom window into the backyard, I saw that my trickster girlfriend Anastasia had built a bonfire. When I stumbled to my closet to get dressed, I found my clothes missing. There were no garments in my dresser, either. In my groggy haze, I realized that my entire wardrobe had become fuel for Anastasia's conflagration. It was too late to intervene, and I was still quite drowsy, so I crawled back in bed to resume snoozing. A while later, I woke to find her standing next to the bed bearing a luxurious breakfast she said she'd cooked over the flames of my burning clothes. After our meal, we stayed in bed all day, indulging in a variety of riotous fun. I'm not predicting that similar events will unfold in your life, Aquarius. But you may experience adventures that are almost equally boisterous, hilarious, and mysterious.

PISCES (Feb. 19–March 20): I've got three teachings for you. 1. Was there a time in your past when bad romance wounded your talent for love? Yes, but you now have more power to heal that wound than you've ever had before. 2. Is it possible you're ready to shed a semi-delicious addiction to a chaotic magic? Yes. Clarity is poised to trump melodrama. Joyous decisiveness is primed to vanquish ingrained sadness. 3. Has there ever been a better time than now to resolve and graduate from past events that have bothered and drained you for a long time? No. This is the best time ever.

freewillastrology@freewillastrology.com

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Needs & Deeds

Can I end a loving relationship because I need more sex?

Dan Savage

I'm a 62-year-old woman. I was married for 33 years and left five years ago. We hadn't gotten along for years, but he never stopped wanting or valuing me for sex—in spite of treating me like a household appliance and cheating on me regularly. Not long after the marriage ended, I met a guy online (my same age) who ticked nearly every box on my partner checklist—one of which was an ongoing interest in maintaining sexual relations. In the beginning, things were hot and crazy—but they cooled after a few months (going from once or twice a day to maybe once a month). Other than that, the relationship continued to grow and we enjoyed being together. I tried to carefully broach the subject, but he was not forthcoming. I'm not proud of it, but I checked his internet history. Big surprise: LOTS OF PORN. No animals or children, but pretty much everything else, with an accent on trans. Eventually, I admitted my sleuthing and asked if his viewing habits were an indicator of his interests or the reason he had turned away from me. After the anger subsided, he explained that he had been single most of his life and had more or less gotten used to taking care of business solo. Also that the women he had been with who floated his boat sexually had been bad (crazy/unstable) in the partner department, and the good partners (me) had been less than satisfying for him in bed. The bottom line is that we are compatible in most every other area and have built a comfortable life together. We have intercourse every four to six weeks, and maybe once in between he will pleasure me. I enjoy both, and also take care of myself once a week. The struggle for me is more ego-driven. I'm no raving beauty, but I am reasonably fit and attractive for my age, and (used to) enjoy feeling desired and valued sexually. Can I get to the place of letting go of that and enjoy the rare occasions of physical congress?

SEX ADVICE PLEASE

"Good for her for getting out of a marriage where she was treated like a 'household appliance' and getting back in the dating game," said Joan Price, author of the books *Naked at Our Age: Talking Out Loud About Senior Sex* and *The Ultimate Guide to Sex After 50*. "But her new relationship, while it sounds comfortable and affectionate, doesn't sound sexually fulfilling."

This relationship doesn't just sound unfulfilling sexually, SAP, it sounds infuriating generally. You entered into this relationship under false pretenses. You let your partner know that "an ongoing interest in maintaining sexual relations" was a priority for you, and he allowed you to believe it was a priority for him. In fairness to him, SAP, he may not have known himself to be incapable of sustaining a strong sexual connection, seeing as he's been single for most of his life. But even if he wasn't aware he couldn't meet your needs then, that doesn't change the fact that you aren't valued/fucked the way you want to be valued/fucked now.

You write that you tried to "carefully broach the subject, but he was not forthcoming," but Price wonders whether you were forthcoming yourself. "'Carefully broach' usually means 'I was vague,'" said Price. "Suppose, instead, she said, 'I really value you, but I don't think we're well-matched sexually. How can we adjust our relationship so we're not putting sexual pressure on each other and we're both free to find other sexual outlets?'"

"I think her best option is to stay friends with this guy but start dating and having sex with others," said Price. "She could continue to have occasional sex with this man if they both agree to a nonexclusive, friends-with-benefits arrangement. Or they could become platonic pals, if that's better for them. But it's imperative that she talk candidly with him."

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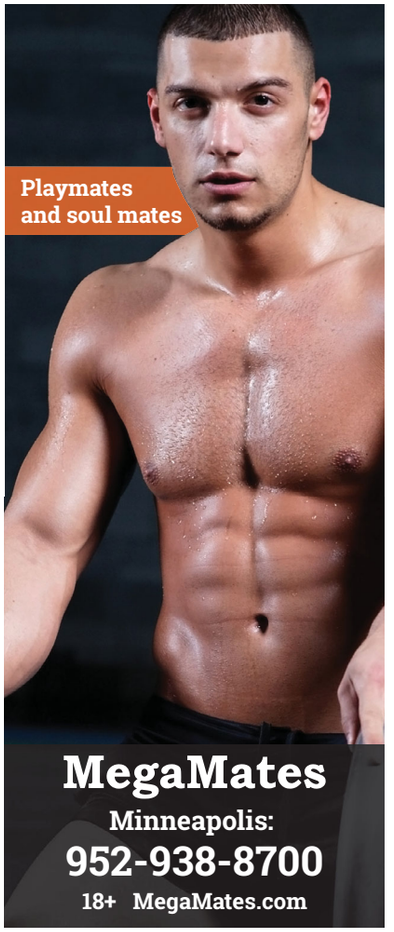

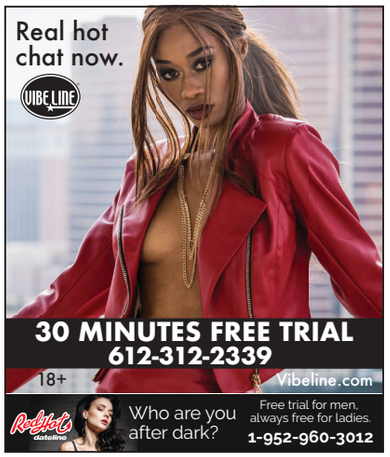

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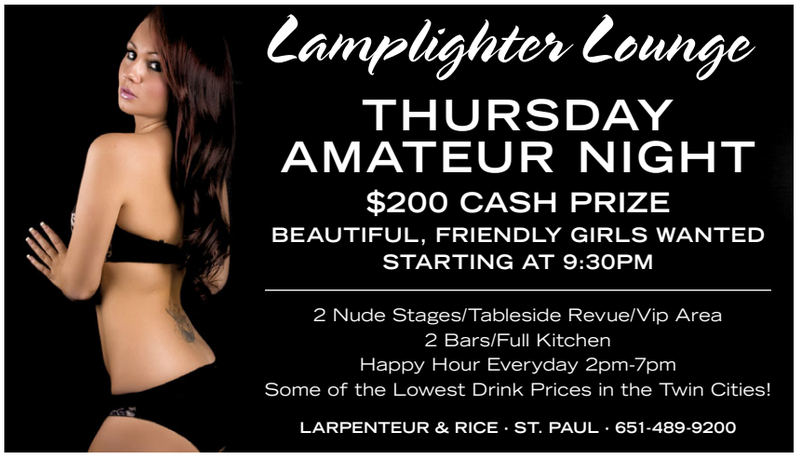

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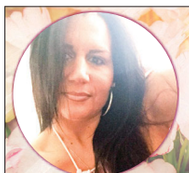
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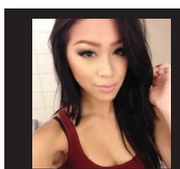
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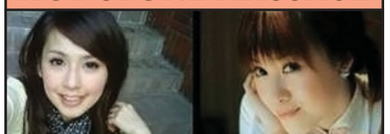
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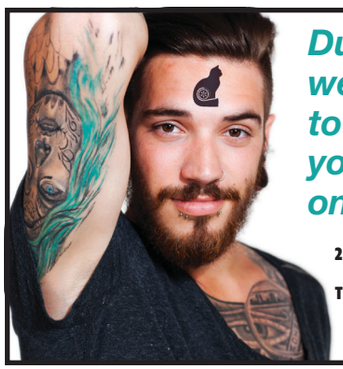

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